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These sporadic growths obviously result from seeds which have floated down the current and taken root, perhaps in their turn to give rise to patches of rice of considerable extent, under favorable conditions of soil and water. But these straggling tracts by the river-side are insignificant in comparison with the dense growth of the plant in certain lakes, where it crowds out other vegetation almost entirely. The first crop of rice I happened to see was that on the little lake which forms the discharge of the Pinidiwin river, and is variously known as Pinidiwin Lake, Manomin Lake, and Rice Lake; it enters the Mississippi by a short thoroughfare, from the N., in the N. W. quarter of section 24, township 146 N., range 35 W. of the 5th principal meridian. This body of water, of roundish figure and about a mile in diameter, is almost an unbroken field of rice, growing so luxuriantly that it overtops the head of the canoe-man and shuts in his view completely. The deepest part of such a lake is generally open or only broken by the bulrushes (*Scirpus lacustris*); next shallower water favors the prevalence or entire predominance of rice; then comes the shallowest places, generally around the edges, where *phragmites* grows, to be in turn supplanted by the rank but nutritious grasses of the adjoining haying meadows.

There is a great difference in the stature of the rice, as well as in the length and thickness of the fruiting heads, according to topical conditions of growth. Some of it is only two or three feet high, with small heads two or three inches long, but under the most favorable circumstances the stalk may shoot up to six or eight feet, possibly ten, and the head be as many inches long, nodding under the weight of the ripened grains. The heads are for the most part of a pale green color with a tinge of yellowish, but generally acquire a purplish shade at maturity. The grain makes good food; it is nutritious, tastes very much like cultivated rice, and is cooked by boiling in the same way. But the commercial article—at any rate the sample I saw—has a dirty appearance due to mixture with dark brown or blackish specks which look to casual observation like little bits of sticks. What part of the seed or its husk this represents, botanically, you probably know better than I do. It seemed to me to belong to the grain itself, as if it were the persistent beak of the carpel. I presume that this is what makes them call the cultivated product “white” rice, in distinction from the speckled native product. I understand that different grades or qualities of wild rice are distinguished in the trade, the best article being that which is freest from the dark specks. When boiled, the grains swell up, but not quite like those of our rice, for they acquire a curious curl or twist.

In estimating the total value of this rice-crop as a food-product, we should not forget to take into consideration the myriads of wild fowl which eat it almost exclusively at the proper season, and are eaten in turn by both whites and Indians.

Very truly yours,  
ELLIOTT COUES.

**Salsola Kali tragus.**—As the introduction and dissemination of weeds are receiving much attention from botanists, some facts regarding the first appearance of the Russian thistle in Chicago and vicinity

will be of interest as way-marks indicating its progress eastward. I first noticed it in August, 1890, when a patch of a dozen or more plants was found by Wolf Lake, on the eastern border of the city. They were on a side track of the Pennsylvania R. R., about a mile from the main line. The boundary line between Illinois and Indiana crossed the track so obliquely at this point that both states were represented in the small area they occupied. A month later others were found at Clarke, Ind., a station in the pine barrens, nine miles east of the boundary line, on the main line of the railroad. In a couple of years the plants had spread considerably, and in 1893 were very abundant on the branch of the road running to Hammond and East Chicago. In late autumn one would come upon them blown about the fields as tumble weeds, though as yet but few are found growing in fields. They are well represented on railroads in the southern and eastern portions of the city, and along those crossing the northern part of Lake co., Ind., within three or four miles of Lake Michigan, and probably much beyond. In August, 1894, I found a few at English Lake, Starke co., Ind., seventy miles from Chicago.

The fewness of the plants in each of these localities indicates that the season in which they occurred was about the first of their appearance. The specimens were generally rather small, but examples two or three feet in diameter are not rare now.

These plants were, at the time of finding them, identified as *Salsola Kali* L., and were so published in "The Flora of Cook County, Illinois, and a part of Lake County, Indiana."<sup>1</sup> They were afterwards mentioned under the same name in notes contributed to the BOTANICAL GAZETTE.<sup>2</sup> Subsequent study of the plants and comparison with specimens from Nebraska led to their identification with the variety *tragus*.—E. J. HILL, *Chicago, Ill.*

*Lemna Valdiviana*.—I have collected and floated out a large number of sheets of *Lemna Valdiviana* Philippi, discovered lately in Randolph, Mass., by Dr. George G. Kennedy. As the station is an interesting one, the plant will be desired by botanists, and I shall be very glad to send it to anybody who may ask for it.—WALTER DEANE, *9 Brewster st., Cambridge, Mass.*

Ruled slides again.—I have found them already in some new ones just received from the Bausch & Lomb Optical Co., Rochester, N. Y. I refer to a slide for a stage microscope. It looks as though, when a slide was hot enough to soften it, a stamp had been pressed on it, making clean creases  $20 \times 20$  mm. I hope they can put the price away down, so that every one will get them.—W. J. BEAL, *Agricultural College, Mich.*—[These have been in the market for several years.—EDS.]

<sup>1</sup>Bulletin of the Chicago Acad. of Sci. **2**: 155. 1891.

<sup>2</sup>I. c. **17**: 248. Ag. 1892.